

THE BUDDHA'S FIRST SERMON

THE ROLLING OF THE
WHEEL OF THE LAW

OR

THE FOUNDING OF THE
REALM OF THE TRUTH

Preached at Benares to the Five Disciples
Full-Moon of ĀSĀLHĀ June-July A.B. 35



TRANSLATED FROM
SAṂYUTTA NIKĀYA, V. 421-3

THE BUDDHA'S FIRST SERMON



Glory to Him the Exalted One
The Arahant
The All Enlightened Buddha

SPOKEN BY THE TATHĀGATO

Thus have I heard: Once the Exalted One was dwelling near Benares, at Isipatana, in the Deer-Park.

Then the Exalted One thus spake unto the company of Five Brethren :

These two extremes, brethren, should not be followed by one who has gone forth as a wanderer :—

Devotion to the pleasures of sense—a low and pagan practice, unworthy, unprofitable, the way of the world (on the one hand), and on the other hand devotion to self-mortification, which is painful, unworthy, unprofitable.

By avoiding these two extremes He who hath won the Truth (the Buddha) has gained knowledge of that *Middle*

Path which giveth Vision, which giveth Knowledge, which causeth Calm, Insight, Enlightenment and Nibbana.

And what, brethren, is that *Middle Path* which giveth Vision, which giveth Knowledge, which causeth Calm, Insight, Enlightenment and Nibbana?

Verily it is this Ariyan Eightfold Path, that is to say :

RIGHT VIEW	RIGHT LIVING
RIGHT AIM	RIGHT EFFORT
RIGHT SPEECH	RIGHT MINDFULNESS
RIGHT ACTION	RIGHT CONCENTRATION

This, brethren, is that *Middle Path*, which giveth Vision, which giveth Knowledge, which causeth Calm, Insight, Enlightenment and Nibbana.

Now this, brethren, is the Ariyan Truth about *Suffering* :

“Birth is Suffering, Decay is Suffering, Sickness is Suffering, Death is Suffering, likewise Sorrow and Grief, Woe, Lamentation and Despair. To be conjoined to things which we dislike, to be separated from things which we like—that also is Suffering. Not to get what one wants—that also is Suffering. In a word, this Body, this fivefold Mass which is based on *Grasping*, that is Suffering.”

Now this, brethren, is the Ariyan Truth about *The Origin of Suffering* :

It is that *Craving* that leads downwards to birth, along with the Lure and the Lust that lingers longingly now here, now there : namely, the Craving for Sensation, the Craving to be born again, the Craving to have done with rebirth. Such, brethren, is the Ariyan Truth about *The Origin of Suffering*.

And this, brethren, is the Ariyan Truth about *The Ceasing of Suffering* :

Verily it is the utter passionless cessation of, the giving up, the forsaking, the release from, the absence of longing for, this *Craving*.

Now this, brethren, is the Ariyan Truth about *The Way leading to the Ceasing of Suffering*. Verily it is this Ariyan Eightfold Path, that is :

RIGHT VIEW	RIGHT LIVING
RIGHT AIM	RIGHT EFFORT
RIGHT SPEECH	RIGHT MINDFULNESS
RIGHT ACTION	RIGHT CONCENTRATION

At the thought, brethren, of *this Ariyan Truth of Suffering*, concerning things unlearnt before there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding : there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, “this Ariyan Truth about *The Origin of Suffering is to be understood*,” concerning things unlearnt before there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding : there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, “*this Ariyan Truth of Suffering has been understood*,” concerning things unlearnt before there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding : there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

Again, at the thought, brethren, of this Ariyan Truth of *The Origin of Suffering*, concerning things unlearnt before there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding : there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, “*the Origin of Suffering must be put away*,” concerning things unlearnt before there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding : there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

So also . . . at the thought “*the Origin of Suffering has been put away*” . . . there arose in me Light.

Again, at the thought, brethren, of this Ariyan Truth of *The Ceasing of Suffering* . . . there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, "*the Ceasing of Suffering must be realised*" . . . there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, "*the Ceasing of Suffering has been realised*" . . . there arose in me Light.

Finally, brethren, at the thought of *this Ariyan Truth of the Way leading to The Ceasing of Suffering* . . . there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, "*the Way leading to The Ceasing of Suffering is to be developed*" . . . there arose in me Light.

At the thought, brethren, "*the Way leading to the Ceasing of Suffering has been developed*" . . . concerning things unlearnt before there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding: there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

Now so long, brethren, as my knowledge and my insight of these thrice-revolved twelvefold Ariyan Truths, in their essential nature, was not quite purified—so long was I not sure that in this world, together with the devas, the Maras, the Brahmas, among the hosts of recluses and brahmins, of devas and mankind, there was one enlightened with supreme enlightenment.

But so soon, brethren, as my knowledge and insight of these thrice-revolved twelvefold Ariyan Truths, in their essential nature, was quite purified—then, brethren, was I assured what it is to be enlightened with supreme enlightenment with regard to the world and its devas, Māras and Brahmas, and with regard to the hosts of recluses and brahmins, of devas and mankind.

But now Knowledge and Insight have arisen in me, so that I know “Sure is my heart’s release. This is my last birth. There is no more becoming for me.”

